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Statement by U.S. Ambassador Robert D. McCallum, Congratulating the Australian Labor Party on their election victory and expressing America's appreciation to Prime Minister Howard for his leadership and friendship.

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I warmly congratulate Mr. Rudd and the Australian Labor Party on a hard fought victory. The United States looks forward to continuing with his new government the close partnership with Australia that has characterized the relationship between our two countries since World War II. That partnership was begun under Labor Prime Minister John Curtin based upon common national interests and shared democratic values which continue to this very day. This extraordinary relationship has existed and flourished regardless of which party held office in Washington or Canberra. Though officials in government have changed, our countries have worked together to defend against common dangers and to advance the interests of both our nations, as well as those of the Asia/Pacific region. We will continue to do so in the future.

I also congratulate Prime Minister Howard for his years of leadership of this great nation. The relationship between our two countries has deepened and broadened during his years as Prime Minister, and America is grateful for his wise counsel and Australia's active participation in issues affecting our two countries, especially those relating to the Asia/Pacific region. Australians can be proud of the positive and constructive role which Australia has played in the global community of nations during his time as Prime Minister.

The bonds forged by our Alliance and common cause endure. I again congratulate Mr. Rudd and the Labor Party, and the United States looks forward to maintaining and enhancing the partnership that has served both our countries so well for so long.